WILLIAM PEACE UNIVERSITY'S LITERARY MAGAZINE

PRISM

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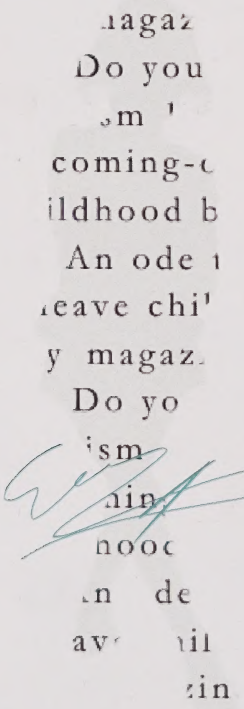
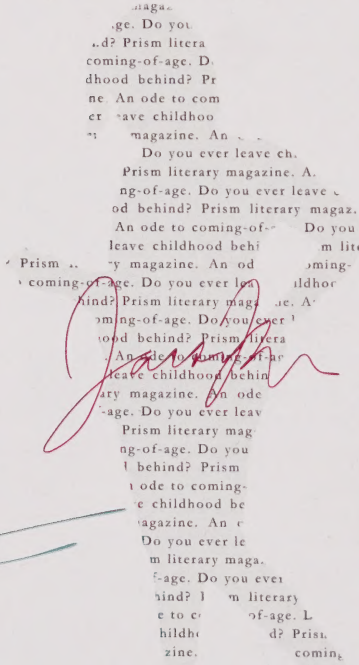
GROWING UP AND GETTING OUT

AN ODE TO COMING-OF-AGE

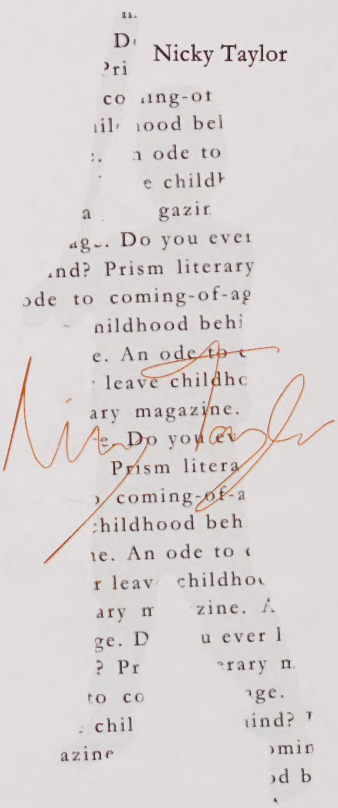
Jasanee Killins, Editor

Emmarose Boylan

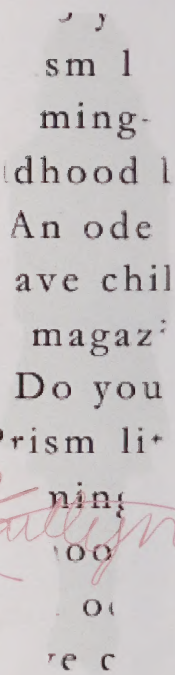


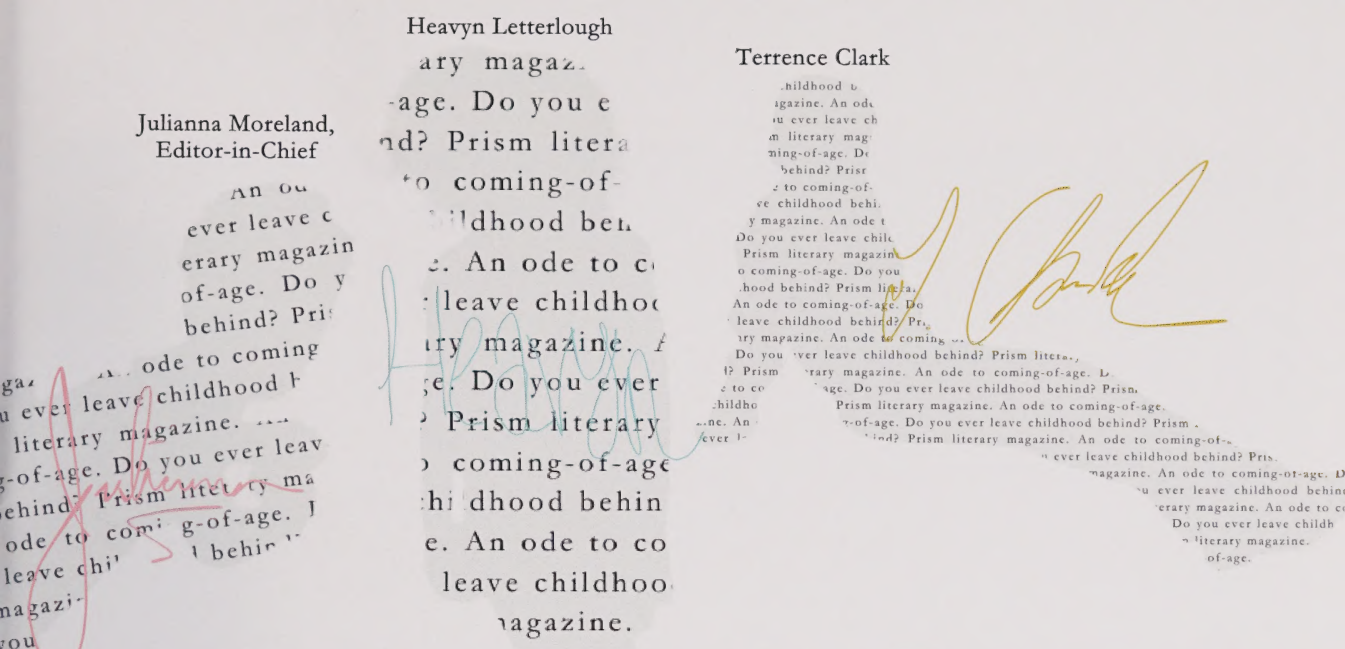


Nicky Taylor



Kaitlyn Bliss





LETTER FROM THE STAFF

Dear readers,

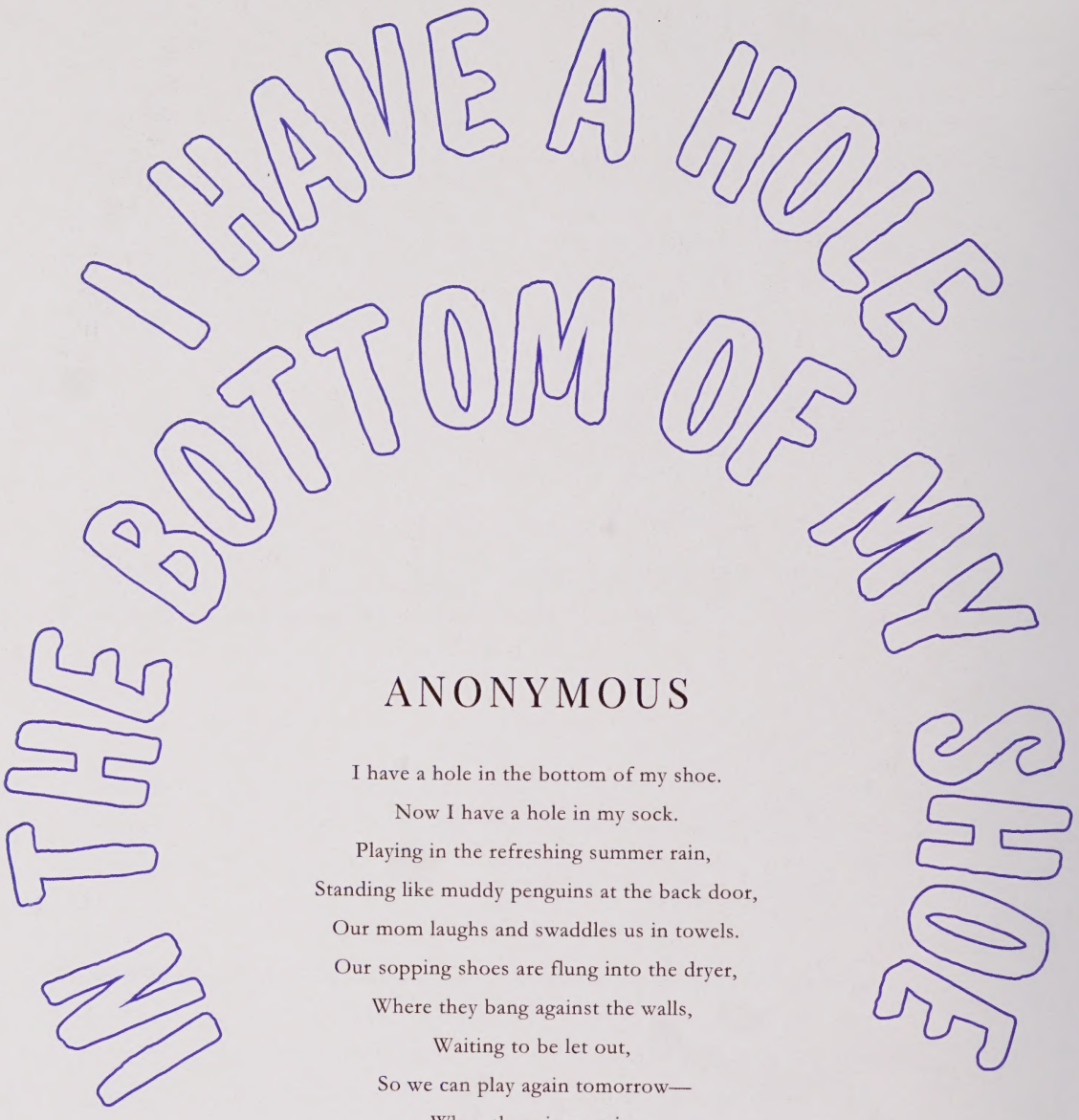
Welcome to the 2024 edition of *Prism*. This year, we delve into an era of coming-of-age through our theme, "Growing Up and Getting Out". We invite you to reminisce alongside us as we reflect on the innocence, wonder, and transformative power of childhood.

As you flip through the pages of *Prism*, you'll encounter a treasure trove of childlike memories and nostalgic artistry. From the cover adorned with sticky notes and hand-drawn mementos from staff and artists' childhoods to incorporating cut-outs of actual family photos from our poets, every detail is deliberate in our mission to revisit the beauty of adolescence.

Childhood is a time when dreams are born and identities are forged. It is where we first learn to navigate the world, and it lays the foundation for the people we turn into. Through the creative expression of WPU students, we celebrate both this formative period in our lives and how far we have come from these experiences.

This year's theme is more than just a reflection on the past; it's a reminder of our ability to mold who we are. As creatives, we carve our lives into our craft and discover ourselves as time goes on. We encourage you to embrace the spirit of curiosity and exploration that defines the stories we continue to tell.

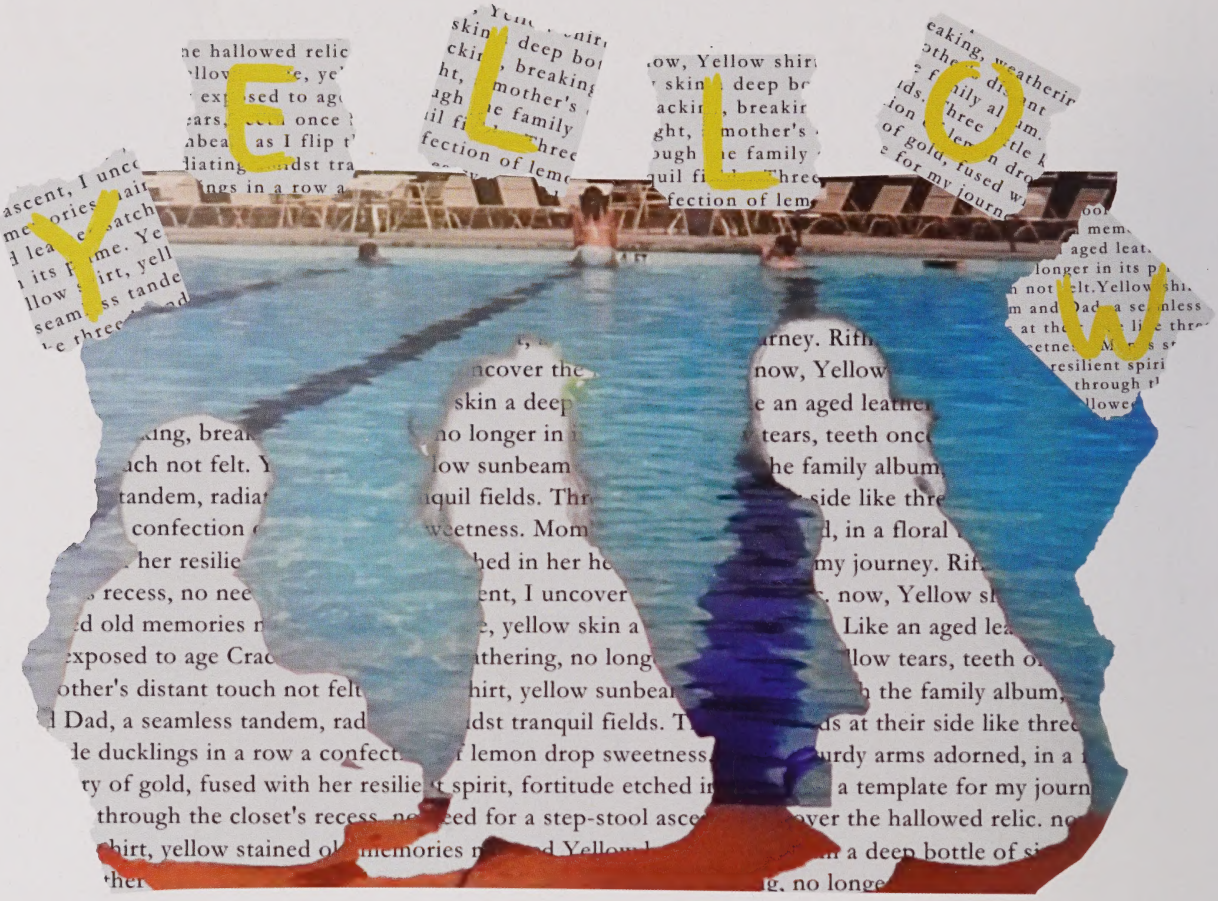
XOXO
PRISM STAFF
2024



ANONYMOUS

I have a hole in the bottom of my shoe.
Now I have a hole in my sock.
Playing in the refreshing summer rain,
Standing like muddy penguins at the back door,
Our mom laughs and swaddles us in towels.
Our sopping shoes are flung into the dryer,
Where they bang against the walls,
Waiting to be let out,
So we can play again tomorrow—
When there is no rain,
Just heat.
Tired, we drag our feet
To the freezer
For a sweet treat,
Where the chill of an icy popsicle
Washes over our sweat.
I have a bigger hole in the bottom of my shoe,
But these socks don't have a hole in them yet!

ERICA MCRAY



Yellow shirt, yellow sunbeam,
as I flip through the family album,
Mom and Dad, a seamless tandem,
radiating amidst tranquil fields.
Three little kids at their side
like three blonde ducklings in a row,
a confection of lemon drop sweetness.

Mom's sturdy arms adorned
in a floral tapestry of gold,
fused with her resilient spirit,
fortitude etched in her heart,
a template for my journey.

Rifling through the closet's recess,
no need for a step-stool ascent,
I uncover the hallowed relic.

Now,
Yellow shirt, yellow stained,
old memories maimed,
Yellow bottle, yellow skin,
a deep bottle of sin,

Like an aged leather satchel,
left exposed to age,
cracking, breaking, weathering,
no longer in its prime.

Yellow tears, teeth once bright,
a mother's distant touch not felt.

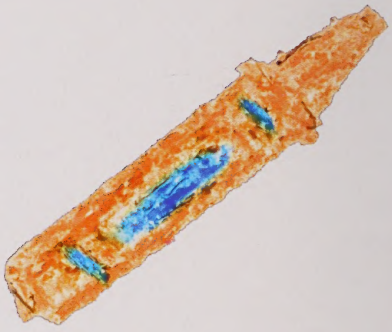
MARY LANGER

ERICA MCRAY

LESSONS IN CURSIVE

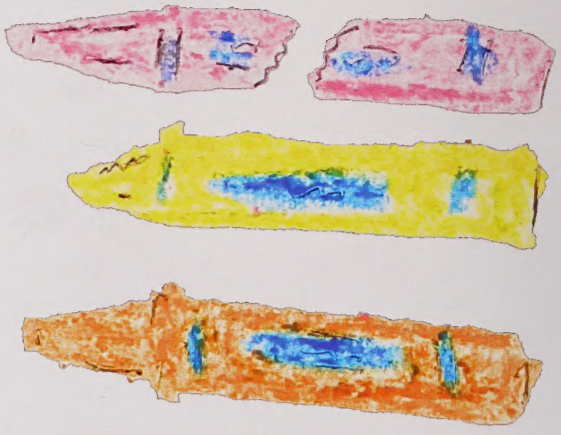
SUNNE KING

A dark and decadent spiral,
You bring life to my young, wandering eyes.
To one, a requirement,
To another, a rite,
To many, a pain,
But to me, a life.



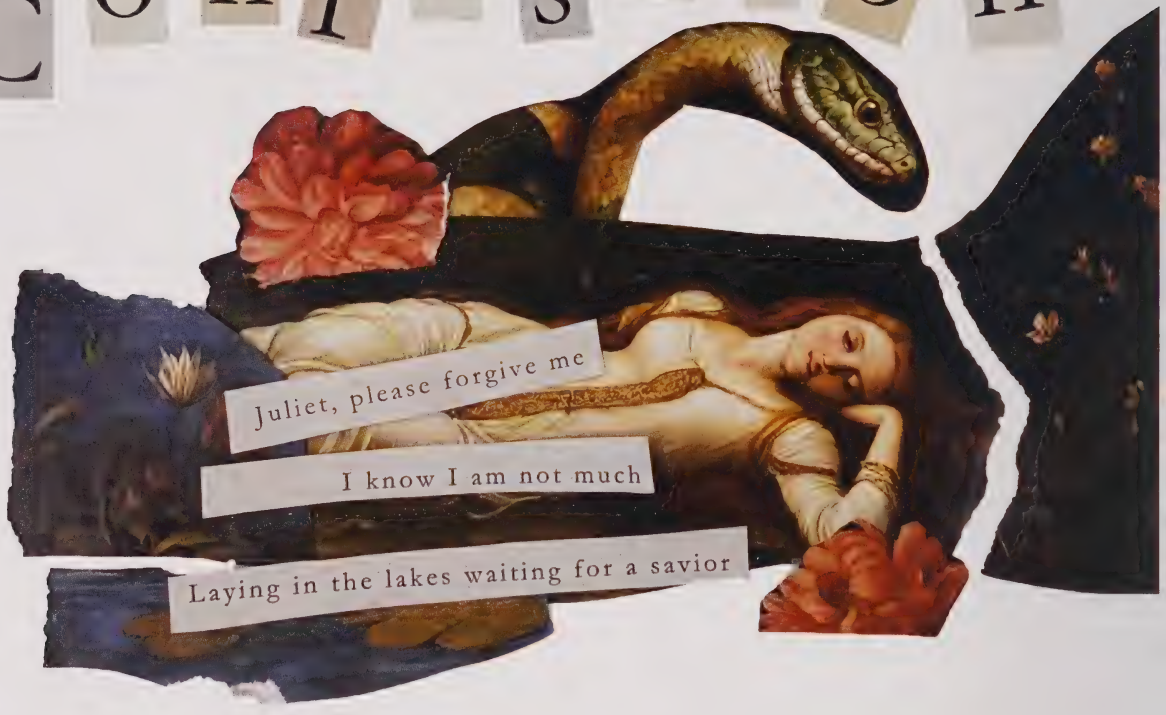
A soft and simple signature,
You gave me gifts I could hardly grasp.
I must match each word in swirling poise,
Or perhaps, in sentences outside of my own.
Conversations, and comments, and stories, and lessons,
Little do I understand you, but I love you without contest.

A broken and battered crayon,
You relinquished your form for silicon chips.
We have traded the scratching of pencils for clicks and keyboards.
No longer giddy children, holding hands under our desks,
Nor disquieted scholars, waiting for letters and billings,
We remain and we create.



ERICA MCRAY

A Letter of Confession



How does it feel, Juliet,
To have him in your arms?

I wish I could say I wasn't envious
That I wasn't jealous,
But it has swallowed me whole
And I feel like I'm drowning,
My self-righteousness weighing me down.

It's not your fault, Juliet,
But I can't help but notice
Our same soft curls
Our fondness for snakes.

I know I shouldn't compare,
But I just can't help it.

Juliet, please forgive me—
I know I am not much,
Laying in the lakes waiting for a savior,
That we are not even comparable
Not even in the same story.

But it's as if a kakistocracy takes over
And rules I have no soul,
To have selfishness instead of remorse.
I hope you understand.

Sincerely,
Ophelia

ANONYMOUS

Hymn to Athena

NICKY TAYLOR

Weaver of one thousand hours —
I have prayed for you in stone,
offerings of honey-dipped apricots and
wool tapestry adorned with owls.

Hungry mouths surround me in the street
as I wear your Aegis. They
feast not on wine
but my answers in your name.

You, Athena, have hair
worth Troy tenfold. To be graced
with a shared talent is
like a kiss on the wrist.

The hungry mouths have grown full
now. My answers are sacrilege,
as I've been sewn your enemy —
unintentional and irreversible.

I've been disgraced, now, as your
pupil. You tarnish my name
in godly threads. Mine silken and
once kind, now fraying endlessly.

Have I not shown enough love
to your skill — to your skin? Nothing
more in life have I desired than
your approval. These rumors,

they burn me. I am cast aside by
your daughters and beloved
by the vandal. Is your own echoing
voice the only thing to please you?

I plead to weave again
in your name and your fashion.
The beast you took me for
was love.

MY GARDEN OF EDEN

Apr. 2, 2024

I found a quote today that a friend wrote to me in a letter a couple of years ago...

"And now that you don't have to be perfect, you can be good." - John Steinbeck, East of Eden.

It reminded me that I don't have to have everything figured out. I easily get caught up in the "hustle" culture around me. I find that I am never satisfied. I often chase what I don't have. When I was young I spent my days wishing them away, but now I am getting older and time is getting faster and I catch myself wishing I could go back. When I was younger I thought I needed to have my whole life planned out to "succeed." This type of thinking has been costly to my soul. I get so focused on achieving tangible things in life I allow it to overrun my heart. I feel heavy, overgrown, and dry. The weeds of the world take over my thoughts telling me I am not enough, but I have found rest in Christ. He leads me to green pastures, and prunes my overgrown heart. I've come to realize that growth is more important than attainment. I don't want to live a life so caught up in my future that I am unaware of my present. I don't want to live a life constantly worrying if where I am isn't good enough, and that I need to be better and do more. It has been exhausting. I want to live free and burdenless. I want to live GOOD. I will slow down and breathe. I will be still in the midst of a world that is busy. I will listen to the wind blow and watch the sunrise.

KESLEE HYLTON

3/20/24

I Find my feelings nearly impossible to describe, but maybe it can be done on paper. The feelings most difficult to describe are the ones that arrive unannounced. The main one that comes to mind, is nostalgia.

I may be wrong, but I don't think nostalgia can be felt unless somethins has changed. It only feels nostalgic to look at something I might not fully understand or appreciate anymore, yet still feel love for. It is only a fragment of what it based to mean, but it's still a part of me.

My childhood is still a part of me even though leaving it was like getting in the cold Pacific Ocean, not knowing if I'd ever come back to shore. As a child, life was a series of following the principles set before me, with the intention of being warm and comfortable. Discovering purpose removed me from a life of principle, and childhood soon drifted away. Ive found that many never undergo the process of finding purpose. The variables of life do not align themselves for change, and so nothing happens. Finding and pursuing a purpose worth living for is never easy, happy, comfortable, or stable. It has been turbulent and restless, but it has been in pursuit of greater meaning. Always choosing to seek out the harder path is daunting, but doing so makes the water seem a bit warmer, and the sunlight shine just a little bit brighter.

I understand that adversity is my forge, not comfort. I pray for a wet, cold, and sandy future and for the only easy day to be yesterday.

If nostalgia has brought me anything in life besides a deep desire to make past ~~JAE~~ proud, it's the steady resolve that everything in life happens for a reason, for something greater.

JAKE VALENTINE

Photography By
DEVIN VERSTEEGEN

FLATTER ABS!
weight loss
Smart Body Scale $79
YOU LOSE, YOU WIN
Make Them LISTEN
Trapped by Their Secret belly-fat burning
struggling:
and too many don't seek help until it's too late.
"I have never been skinny."
Belly Shrink
toned
Goal: GET FIT
100 calories
YOU DREAM OF BECOMING AN EXERCISE ADDICT
SKINNY
fat
Diet
melt Mega Calories
200 calories.
110 CALORIES.
200 calories.
60 calories
minimize your middle.
Body goals
WEIGHT
tighter abs
LOSE WEIGHT
BLAST BELLY FLAB
YOUR WAISTLINE
flat abs
skinny
NOTHING
calories
calories
fat
You should be small.
WANT THESE ABS?
Ditch Sugar
Lose Inches,
You should lose weight
with 69% fewer calories
0 Pounds
37 Pounds
get sexy
Flat abs
Put your head in the clouds
DIET LOSE WEIGHT
YOU'RE EATING TONS
BLAST THAT FAT!
killer body.
The choice is yours, and it's simple.
Before & After

ANONYMOUS

WISHING FOR BETTER DAYS

NAOMI MYERS

In the shadows of my youth, darkness lingered—
A heavy cloak of hardship draped over my shoulders,
Every step a struggle, every breath weighed down,
A burden too heavy for a child to bear.

Loneliness was my constant companion
Echoing through empty halls and hollow hearts—
No warm embrace, no gentle touch,
Just the cold sting of abandonment.

I navigated the world with wounded wings,
Broken and bruised, yet still I soared
Through the storms of neglect and the fires of abuse—
I fought to find a sliver of light.

But in the depths of despair, hope flickered,
A tiny ember in the vast expanse of darkness—
I clung to it like a lifeline, a beacon of possibility
Guiding me through the endless night.
And as I emerged from the shadows of my past,
I carried with me the scars of my childhood
But also the strength forged in the fires of adversity—
A survivor, a warrior, a living testament

To the power of resilience, the beauty of transformation.
From the ashes of hardship, a phoenix rises,
And though the scars may never fade,
I am stronger, braver, more alive.

For I have walked through the fires of hell
And emerged on the other side,
A testament to the human spirit,
A living, breathing, beating heart.

So let the world bear witness
To the power of the human soul;
For in the darkness of our struggles,
We find the light of our resilience.

THE GARDEN

EMMAROSE BOYLAN

It starts with a passing face,
A small smile,
A simple seed exchanged between small daisies carefree.
Planted with care in your garden,
Unknowing if it will blossom or stagnate.

Over time and each gradual interaction,
A seed buried in laughs and memory flourishes.
More and more seeds collected,
All different colors and varieties are traded, gifted, and cherished.

Some may lead to nothing,
While others grow alongside you,
Collectively creating a spectacle of your own creation.
Each one placed carefully, grouped with single-minded purpose.

There are buds that have bloomed and were left forgotten,
Flowers and thorns that wither and infect.
Trust, fragile as a glass petal shattered, now lays torn up from the roots—
Affecting the easy trade you've found yourself in before,
Locking yourself behind a gate to protect the garden that you've adored.

It will take time to process.
It will take time to mend the earth,
But those awaiting you outside your garden walls with open arms,
A rock you may have had or found along the way,
Is all you may need to start up Your Garden once again.

Embroidery Art By
CAITLIN CORLL

MARY LANGER

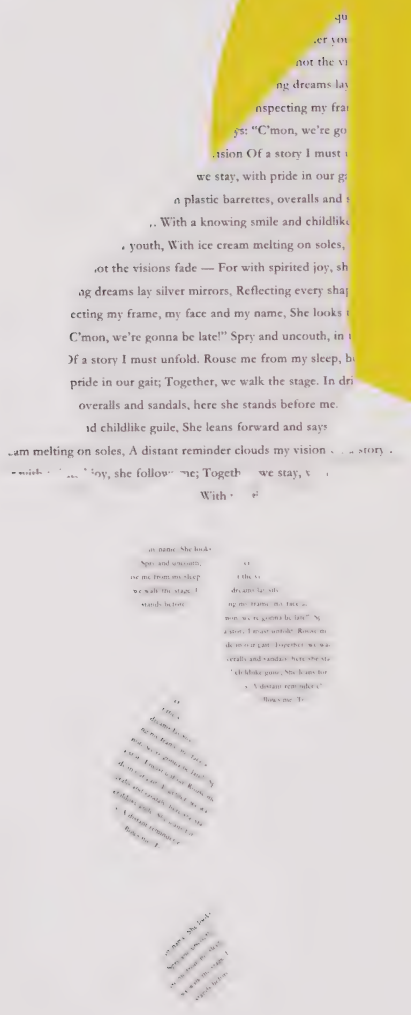
The wood creaks and
chains groan as I sit upon
this antiqued heirloom,
A child of my Opa's labor,
birthed to provide a seat for this
perfect mountain landscape
with its peaks kissed by light
above all the noise below.

A garden nearby
tended for with gentle palms,
my Oma's peaceful creation,
with speckled cucumbers and carrots
that are cherished in home-cooked meals.
But as I turn the corner
and ascend the stairs,
I find everything to be shaken up,
tumultuous snowflakes disrupting the home.

For my father, never accepted,
caused turmoil at the hearth,
throwing in extra logs
when the fire was already blazing.
A black sheep in his youth, and
still, as he matured.
When he was scolded, he disappeared without
a word
to sulk in his thoughts.

Just as I am now disappearing
to find some tranquility in the chaos,
praying for the snow to settle.
I take a deep breath and find
solace in God's nature,
sitting on a wooden swing.

NIGHT OF COMMENCEMENT



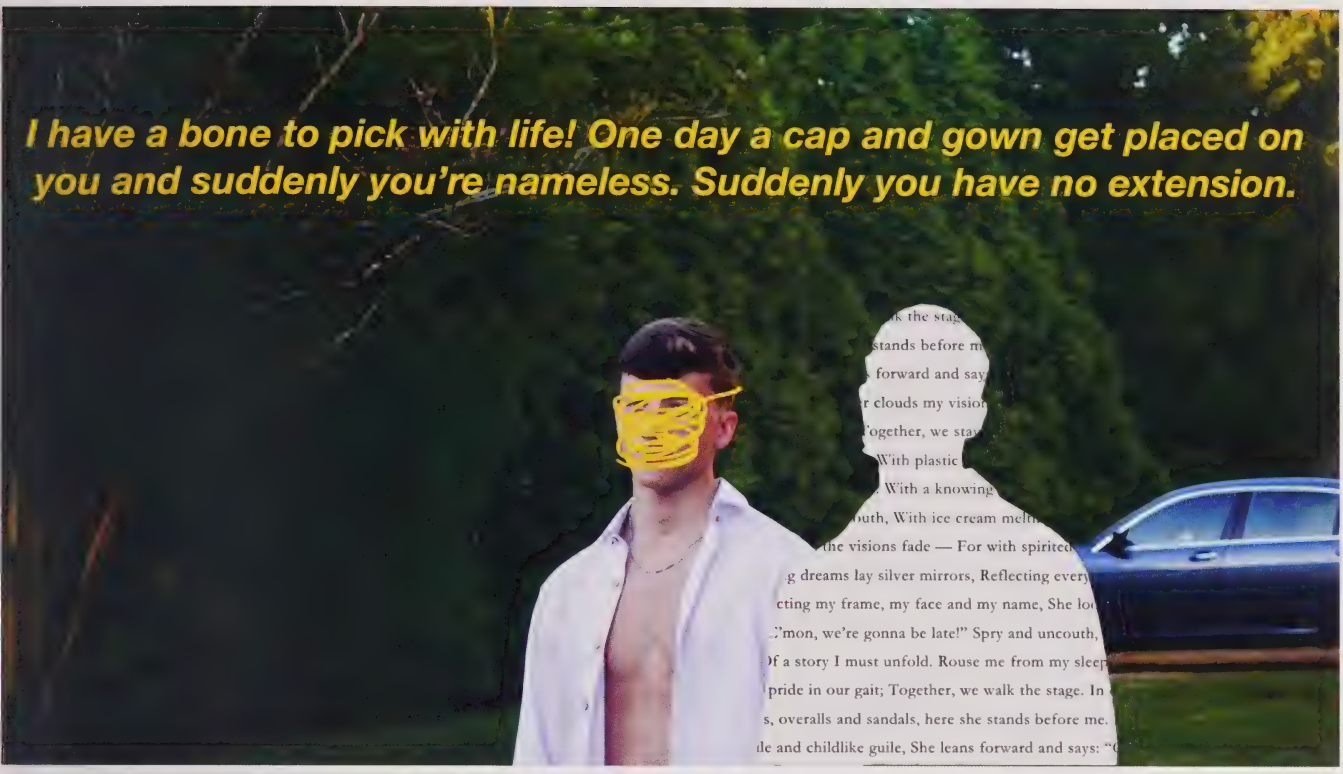
SUNNE KING

In drifting dreams lay silver mirrors,
Reflecting every shape and scene.
With plastic barrettes, overalls
and sandals, here she stands before me.
Inspecting my frame, my face and my name,
She looks to me in inquiry.

With a knowing smile and childlike guile,
She leans forward and says: "C'mon, we're gonna be late!"

Spry and uncouth, in truth to her youth,
With ice cream melting on soles,
A distant reminder clouds my vision
Of a story I must unfold.

Rouse me from my sleep, but let not the visions fade —
For with spirited joy, she follows me;
Together, we stay, with pride in our gait;
Together, we walk the stage.


I have a bone to pick with life! One day a cap and gown get placed on you and suddenly you're nameless. Suddenly you have no extension.

I've heard of sucking the marrow out of life's bones, but what of mine?
Life has set itself a place, devoured, and left.

ANONYMOUS

WAITING ROOM

KAMALI PADILLA

I'm waiting.
Time is passing.
The clock is ticking.
I fiddle with the strings of my hoodie.

I'm still waiting.
The leather of the chair sticks to my legs.
I shift to try and peel it from my flesh.
My posture is deplorable.
I make sure my back is straightened.
It hits the back of the chair.
Now it feels better.

I'm still waiting.
I pull out my phone for the hundredth time.
My thumbs are hard at work,
Sorting through texts, emails, pictures,
Endless games that I downloaded but long forgotten.
I see my patience reflected in its battery:
Fading into red.

Why am I still waiting?
I could have been home by
now.
I could have finished
my breakfast,
Finished arranging my
unruly bangs,
Finished my cup of coffee.
No doubt it was ice cold by now,
Sitting, waiting patiently on my desk.
I try to imagine it,
Emulate it.

I hate that they're making me wait.
My family doctor usually isn't behind schedule.
Maybe I should just give up.
March up right to the nurses at the desk,
Tell them that I need to reschedule.
Maybe a week from now.
But I need this appointment.
I can't have my medicine without my examination,
And I can't have my examination without the doctor.
This is important.

Yet, I'm still waiting.
"This will throw my whole day off."
I think to myself.
"No time for homework,
No time to study, no time to call my mother,
And barely any time to make it to rehearsal tonight.
I should have planned for this."
I'm still waiting.
Damn, I hate waiting.

A DORMANT TETHER

NICKY TAYLOR

Wrapped in leather, you sit in my window,
donned in flowers and gold accent.
When I see you, my wrists ache
from the memory of you rubbing
my skin raw. Perhaps it's
revenge for the night I scratched
ideas in your flesh so strong
your back began to wear.

Thousands of scars haunt your
body, men and women scrawled of
ink. They wander in lifeless castles,
in a village where clouds do not move.
They, you, wait for new wounds of
wind to wave flags
from their towers once again.

Do they think about you, about me?
The way that your binding bound us
to a mindless flow of worlds never spoken
and words never realized. There is
a fine layer of dust atop your
stark spine; there are one thousand
lives trapped in your skin.

Art By
MELISSA
EVERS

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